

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Joint Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held at Barton-le-Street Village Hall on 4 April 2013, commencing at 10.00 am.

Present:-

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Clare Wood in the Chair.

Ryedale District Council: Councillor Robert Wainwright.

Hambleton District Council: Councillor Christine Cookman.

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Parish Councils: Stephen Gibson (Ryedale).

Country Land and Business Association: William Worsley.

National Farmers Union: Robert Hicks.

Natural England: Justine Clark and Rosie Eaton (substitute for Nancy Steadman).

Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB: Paul Jackson, Liz Bassindale and Maggie Cochrane.

North Yorkshire County Council Jane Wilkinson (Secretary).

Ryedale District Council: Paula Craddock.

Present by Invitation: Catriona McLees – North York Moors National Park Authority.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

87. Apologies for Absence

Were submitted on behalf of Graham Megson (North Yorkshire County Council), Graham Banks (Hambleton District Council), David Pontefract (Parish Councils Hambleton), Geoff Eastwood (Ramblers) and Nancy Stedman (Natural England).

88. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

89. Matters Arising

Minute No 75 – Gate Pillars at Hardy Flatts, Whitwell

Confirmation received from the Building Conservation Officer at Ryedale District Council that the protective wooden posts did not require Listed Building Consent as they were not touching the gate pillars. The AONB Manager agreed to speak with the Estate about finding a more visually appealing alternative.

Minute No 75 – Retaining Wall at Oulston Bank

Repairs to fallen sections of the wall reported at previous meetings were now complete. Members were impressed by the quality of the works and the wall's improved appearance which they said looked fantastic. Sadly however a further section of the wall towards the bottom of the bank had subsequently collapsed and Members enquired if Newburgh Priory Estate intended to carry out further repair works.

The AONB Manager said the Estate had no specific plans at present to carry out further works to the wall, as far as he was aware. However he agreed to raise the matter during the course of discussions about various other on-going projects.

Members hoped that the Estate would learn the lessons from its past experience namely that any delay in the commencement of repair works was likely to result in the situation deteriorating further.

Minute No 75 – AONB Commemorative Log Seats

Bad weather and the decision to increase the number of log seats to 25 meant that only one seat had been installed. The ideas for suggested locations received from parish councils together with those of AONB Officers exceeded 25 in number. Each location would be assessed before the final selection was made. Assurances were given that all of the log seats would be installed prior to the next meeting at which a final report would be provided.

Minute No 78 – Sustainable Development Fund – Applicant The Autism Centre

Efforts to arrange a meeting between the County Council's AONB Officers and representatives from the Autism Centre had proved unsuccessful. On three occasions the Autism Centre had withdrawn at short notice.

Minute No 78 – Wiganthorpe Wall, Scackleton

The location identified as a possible source for the stone needed to replace the missing top stones had proved unsuitable. The amount needed was not deemed "de minimis" and would require mineral planning consent. Alternative sources of stone were being sought.

Minute No 78 – Traditional Highway Direction Signs (Hambleton)

Action undertaken following the previous meeting had resulted in the remaining four signs being reinstated.

Minute No 81 – Planning Advice Fees

It was reported that discussions had taken place with Officers from Hambleton and Ryedale District Councils about the suggestion to charge applicants a fee for providing planning advice. A Protocol was now in place whereby generic advice would remain free and the District Councils notified of any advice given pertaining to specific proposals.

90. AONB Unit Activity

Considered –

The joint report of AONB Officers and the RAY Community Projects Officer detailing their activities and the progress achieved by the Unit during the period November-March 2012/13.

A slideshow of photographs of completed and on-going projects referred to in the report that included countryside management works, community projects, volunteer activity, Rural:Urban Schools Twinning project and Junior Ranger Club days was shown at the meeting.

Copies of the responses made to planning applications received since the last meeting were tabled (Appendix 3). In the light of her recorded objections to the planning application at Station Road Ampleforth the Chairman said that if any Member wished to comment on the application she would vacate the chair and the room whilst it was discussed. Members of the Committee said they did not wish to discuss/comment upon that application.

Members asked what action the Unit planned to take to counteract the threat posed by Ash die-back disease. Within the boundaries of the AONB there were a lot of ash trees which would almost certainly be affected that would alter the local landscape. Members asked for information on the number and species of field and hedgerow trees being planted.

The Committee was informed that the latest advice was that as young trees were more likely to be killed by the disease, owners should consider carefully whether to fell mature trees and woodland (as this would necessitate planting young trees to replace those felled). Studies had shown that whilst affected, mature trees stood a better chance of surviving the disease. The Unit would monitor the situation and if mature trees were lost then the Unit would seek to replace them. Approximately 50/60 individual trees would be planted this year, all of which would be oak grown from acorns at Castle Howard. Whilst it was acknowledged this was a relatively small number it represented a significant increase on the numbers that had been planted prior to the previous three years.

It was pointed out that oak trees were very slow growing and that perhaps consideration should be given to planting a greater number of different species such as sycamore and field maple. In the absence of the representative from the Forestry Commission Members requested that a report/presentation on Ash Dieback was included on the agenda of the next meeting.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore sought clarification of the reason why two mature ash trees had recently been removed from the highway verge on the road between Crayke and Oulston. The AONB Manager said he was not aware of the reason and that he would investigate and get back to her following the meeting. He suspected that the landowner and not the County Council's highways department was responsible.

Members noted the overall budget position and supported the approach adopted with regard to the use of reserves. Members were pleased to note that 65% of the funding for Sustainable Development Fund projects had already been allocated and that the impact of the secondment of Rebecca Thompson was to be reviewed the following year.

With regard to the planning application in respect of Lodge Farm, Scackleton, a Member expressed concerns about possible light pollution and pointed out that landscaping conditions attached to a previous application at the same site had not been executed. The AONB Manager took on board the comments about light pollution and confirmed that in his response he had made it clear that the

Applicant was operating in breach of planning conditions and that he would continue to pursue the matter.

On summing up the Chairman on behalf of Members of the Committee congratulated the AONB Manager and his team on their achievements and for an interesting and comprehensive presentation.

Resolved –

That the content of the report and the information provided at the meeting be noted.

That a report on Ash Dieback disease be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

91. North York Moors National Park Authority - Moors and More Project

Catriona McLees, Head of Tourism at the North York Moors National Park gave an overview of the North York Moors and More project. The Project covered the National Park and surrounding area and aimed to encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more and raise the profile of the area.

She described how by working with local tourism businesses and communities over the next 12 months aspects of the area that made it special and distinctive would be identified, developed and promoted. The three main strands to the Project were:-

- Workshops and research to identify the area's most distinctive features
- Creation of a toolkit, promotional resources, films and images for use by participating tourism, creative, food and drink retail businesses
- Development of a North York Moors Tourism Network to make it easier for businesses to work together and direct support to help them create new products, packages and experiences to make tourism more profitable.

A copy of an illustrated map of the area produced by a cartoonist that was to be circulated to participating businesses was tabled at the meeting. Members noted that Guides for the National Park and AONB were due to be launched the following month on the specialist niche Green Traveller web-site.

The Project was funded through Leader funding made available through the Rural Development Programme.

Members were enthusiastic and supportive of the Project and suggested that consideration be given to posting copies of the illustrated map on village notice boards. The ability to access films and images of the area would be a valuable and useful resource which Members said should be promoted more widely.

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92. New Agricultural Buildings Design Guidance

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager inviting the Committee to approve the final draft of a new Agricultural Buildings Design Guidance (copy attached to report) for use within the AONB. The report also sought guidance from the Committee on how the Design Guidance should be distributed and if it should be adopted by the relevant Local Planning Authorities.

Members were pleased to see their previous concerns had been addressed and said that publication of the Design Guidance was a huge step forward. Members only criticism was that the document was lengthier than they had hoped but given its importance recognised the need for accuracy. The only amendment requested by Members was that the wording in the Glossary for 'setting' was revised.

Members noted the reasoning behind the suggestion of the Local Planning Authorities that the Design Guidance be adopted by them as a material consideration in Development Management and endorsed this approach. The AONB Manager said that as this suggestion had originated from the Districts Councils it was less likely they would then reject it.

Members debated whether the Design Guidance in its entirety or just a summary should be circulated. The consensus of the majority of Members was that the Summary together with a link to the AONB web-site where the full Design Guidance would be available along with contact details for the AONB Unit would be appropriate.

Resolved –

- (a) That following amendment of the wording used for 'setting' in the Glossary the final draft of the Design Guidance be approved and used by the AONB Manager when responding to planning application consultations.
- (b) That a summary of the Design Guidance together with a link to the AONB web-site and the contact details of the AONB Unit be printed and sent to all relevant farmers, landowners, agents and local construction companies.
- (c) That Ryedale and Hambleton District Councils be requested to adopt the Design Guidance as a material consideration in Development Management.

93. Development within the AONB

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager presenting details of planning applications determined within the AONB during 2012.

The Committee was informed that subsequent to the report being written the applications for an agricultural workers dwelling at Scackleton had been withdrawn.

Resolved –

That the content of the report be noted.

94. AONB Action Programme 2012/13

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager on progress achieved implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2012/13. Full details of performance against 2012/13 targets was appended to the report and illustrated in the presentation given earlier in the meeting.

The AONB Manager said that an analysis of performance revealed that 75% of specific targets had been achieved or substantially achieved and that statistically compared to the previous year performance had improved marginally.

The AONB Manager then went on to highlight key points under each of the headings in the report.

A Member referred to the concerns of his parish council in relation to the suitability of a particular timber access route. The AONB Manager advised that he was not aware of the outcome of the Timber Freight Quality Partnership consultation referred to in paragraph 10 of the report but that he would check the results following the meeting. He confirmed that his response to the consultation had been that the AONB had a continuous yield of timber which needed to be factored into their findings.

The Chairman congratulated the AONB Manager and his team on their overall performance and paid tribute to the work done by the volunteers.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made to date implementing the Management Plan be noted.
- (b) That the achievements against Targets for 2012/13 be noted.

95. AONB Business Plan and Action Programme 2013/14

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager inviting the Committee to approve a programme of proposed activity designed to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2013/14.

The Chairman commented that compilation of the report required a great deal of time and effort and she questioned whether this would be better spent carrying out countryside management works.

The AONB Manager replied that the report laid down targets for the forthcoming year which then enabled performance to be monitored. He asked Members whether in the future they wanted to continue to receive the report in its entirety or would prefer instead to receive a summary with a link to the AONB website where the full document would be accessible. Members voted unanimously in favour of receiving a summary report.

With regard to the actual content of the report Members requested that the AONB Manager continued to liaise with the CE Electric and Bulmer Parish Council regarding overhead electricity cable undergrounding. Members also requested that three traditional direction signs at Terrington be added to the list of those waiting to be restored.

Resolved –

- (a) That the targets for 2013/14, contained in the Action Programme, be approved.
- (b) That the continued contribution to the Native Woodland Development Officer post is approved and noted.
- (c) That future AONB Business Plan and Action Programme reports contain only a summary of activities, targets and projects.

96. AONB Management Plan Review

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager informing the Committee of progress of the AONB Management Plan review and highlighting the next steps to be taken.

Details of the review timetable were set out in the report.

Resolved –

That progress achieved and the next steps as detailed in the report be noted.

97. National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) Activity

Considered –

The report of the AONB Manager highlighting the current work areas of the NAAONB.

The Committee noted that the Government had subsequently adopted the recommendations from the National Growth Strategy and also noted the position with regard to future funding.

Resolved –

That the progress and issues detailed in the report be noted.

98. Reports from Partner Organisations (Oral Reports)

Ryedale District Council

Independent Planning Inspectors were due to examine the content of the Local Plan at hearings being held on 21, 22 & 23 May 2013.

The planning application in respect of dwellings at Station Road, Ampleforth was due to be determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting on 6 April 2013.

Natural England

Updated National Character Area Profiles were now available for the Vale of Pickering, North York Moors National Park and the Howardian Hills AONB on their web-site.

Four applicants had been selected for Higher Level Stewardship Schemes. The four comprised of two new applicants and two applicants who's Countryside Stewardship Schemes had expired earlier in the year.

99. Dates of future meetings

Resolved –

- (i) That the date of the annual site visit is 26 July 2013.
- (ii) That the date and time of the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee is 7 November 2013 at 10.00 am at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.

JW/ALJ